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## A PASSAGE IN THE LIFE OF BOUCHER.

The painter who most faithfully represents French art of the eighteenth century, is Boucher, an artist of the school of Watteau. In his career we may trace that caprice which holds sovereign sway, without reverence for the past, and without regard for the future. Boucher, spite of the contempt of some, or the pity of others, will, however, always hold a place in the history of Art. It is impossible for us to ignore this painter, who reigned for forty years, overwhelmed with fame and fortune—protesting in his unrestrained freedom against the recognized masters, opening a school fatal to all that is noble, grand and beautiful, and yet not devoid of a certain coquettish grace, a certain magic of color, and, finally, a certain charm before unknown.

The studio of Boucher was in the Rue Richelieu. Not far from it, in the Rue St. Anne, he passed almost every day the shop of a fruiterer. He often saw a young girl on the doorstep without being much struck by her, although she was beautiful, simple and touching. One day, after three weeks of austere solitude, he stopped astonished before the fruit-shop. It was when cherries were in season. Baskets of freshly-gathered fruit tempted the passers-by with their charming hues; a garbure of leaves concealed the fruit that was not quite ripe. But it was not for the cherries that Boucher stopped. As he passed, the fruiterer's daughter, with bare arms and loosely flowing hair, was serving a neighbor. You should have seen her take the cherries in her delicate hand, put them, without any other measure, into the lap of her customer, and give a divine smile in return for the four sous she received in payment. The painter would have given four louis for the cherries, for the hand which served them, and above all for the divine smile. When the customer had gone, he advanced some steps without knowing what he was going to say. He was a perfect master in the art of gallantry. How happened it, however, that Boucher on that day lost all his courage at the sight of this simple and feeble young girl?

Boucher, who had advanced resolutely, like a man who is sure of his object, crossed the threshold of the fruiterer, all pale and trembling, and very much at a loss what to say. The young girl regarded him with so much serenity and calmness that he somewhat recovered his presence of mind. He asked for cherries, and soon rallying himself, begged the young girl to allow him to sketch her beautiful face. She made no answer. The mother entered. As Boucher was a man of fine address, and the mother a coquette on the wane, he succeeded in obtaining her consent to take the portrait at his leisure. She brought her daughter the next day to the painter's studio. Boucher did not detain the mother. He made the daughter take her seat on a sofa, sharpened his pencil, and set to work with great joy.

Rosina possessed that description of beauty which is ignorant of its own attractions, which touches rather than seduces. Her regular profile called up pleasant recollections of the antique lines of beauty. She was a brunette, but her locks reflected in the light those beautiful golden tints which charmed Titian. Her eyes were of an undecided hue, like the sky during some autumn twilights; her mouth, somewhat large, perhaps, had a divine expression of candor. Boucher became enamored of Rosina, not like a man who makes a sport of love, but like a poet who loves with tears in his eyes—a love tender, pure, and worthy of that heaven to which it rises, and whence it has descended. Rosina loved Boucher. How could she help loving him who gave her double assurance of her beauty, both by his lips and by his skill. What was the result? You can guess. They loved one another: they told one another so.

The Virgin, which was to be the master-piece of Boucher, was not finished. The face was beautiful, but the painter had not yet been able to shed over it that divine sentiment which constitutes the charm of such a work. He hoped, he

despaired, he meditated, and gazed at Rosina; in a word, he was at that fatal barrier, the barrier of genius, where all talent which is not genius must pause, and which, now and then, some who have the courage to make the attempt may perchance succeed in surmounting. It was fifteen days since Rosina had commenced her sittings. At eleven o'clock one morning Boucher was preparing his palette, Rosina loosening her hair. There was a ring at the door of the studio. Rosina went and opened it, as if she had belonged to the house.

"Monsieur Boucher?" inquired a young girl, who blushing crossed the threshold.

"What can I do for you?" said Boucher, glancing at the reflection of the young girl in a mirror. He approached to meet her.

"Monsieur Boucher, I am a poor girl without bread. If my mother was not sick and destitute of everything, I could succeed in gaining a livelihood by my needle; but for the sake of my mother I have resigned myself to become a model. I have been told that I have a pretty hand and a passable face. Look, monsieur, do you think that I would do for a model?"

The stranger uttered all this with an air of vague anxiety; but what especially struck the painter while she was speaking, was her coquettish and seductive beauty. Farewell to Rosina, farewell to all simple and sublime love. The newcomer appeared to Boucher as the embodiment of all his previous reveries. It was this very Muse, less beautiful than pretty, less striking than graceful, that he had so ardently sought for. There was in her face a trace of divinity such as might be found in a fallen angel, something which acts upon the heart and lips at the same time—in fine, a certain something which we cannot describe, which charms and intoxicates without elevating the mind. She was dressed as a poor girl, which contrasted somewhat with the delicacy of her features and movements. Boucher, although no bad physiognomist, did not discover any art or study in this beauty; she masked both by an air of lofty innocence. He allowed himself to be captivated.

"How, mademoiselle," said he to her, with an admiring look; "you say that you are tolerably beautiful? Say rather, intensely."

"Not at all," said she, with the sweetest smile in the world.

"Really, mademoiselle, you have come most opportunely. I was in search of a beautiful expression for the head of the Virgin; perhaps I shall find it in yours. Incline your head a little on your bosom. Put your hand on this arm-chair. Rosina, draw aside the red curtain."

Boucher did not notice the tearful glance cast on him by Rosina. She silently obeyed, while she asked herself if she was no longer fit for anything but to draw the curtain. She went and sat down in a corner of the studio, to observe at her ease, and without being seen, her who had come to disturb her happiness. But scarce was she seated on the divan, when Boucher who liked solitude with two, recommended her to return to her mother, at the same time enjoining upon her to come early the next day. She went without saying a word, with death at her heart, foreseeing that she would be forgotten for her who remained *tete-a-tete* with her lover. She dried her tears at the foot of the staircase. "Alas! what will my mother say when she sees me so sad?" She walked about the streets to give her sadness time to disappear. "Besides," she continued, "by waiting a little I shall see her come out. I shall be able to discover what is passing in her heart."

She waited. More than an hour passed away. Boucher spoiled his beautiful Virgin, to the fullness of his bent, by endeavoring to unite in it two styles of character. The stranger at last came out. It had rained in the morning, and the street was almost impracticable for pretty feet. She slipped along as light as a cat in the direction of the Palais Royal. She stopped at a house of poor appearance, gave a crown to the porter, cast her eyes about her suspiciously, and dis-

appeared within the portal. Rosina had followed her. On seeing her disappear, she examined the house, and, not daring to push her curiosity any further, resolved also to return home. An invisible hand, however, retained her in spite of herself. She must needs spy at all the windows of the house. She had a presentiment that she should see the unknown one again. All of a sudden, to her great surprise, she fancied that she recognized her in some one who was going out in an entirely different costume. This time the poor girl was dressed as a fine lady, in a taffeta robe, with a train, the end of which she strove to thrust into her pocket, a mantilla, red heels, and all the accessories.

"Where can she be going in that dress?" Rosina asked herself, as she followed her almost step for step.

The lady went straight to a gilded carriage, which was waiting for her before the Palais Royal. A lackey rushed before her to open the door. She quickly stepped into the carriage with the air of one accustomed to do so every day.

"I suspected it," muttered Rosina; "there was an indescribable something in her manner, her mode of speech, the softened pride of her glance, which surprised me. There is no use for her to assume all sorts of masks; she will be found out in the end. Alas! I wonder if he found her out!"

The next day Rosina, purposely, came a little late. Boucher did not, however, on seeing her, utter that sweet phrase which consoles the absent for absence, whether from hearth or heart:

"I was waiting for you."

"Well," said she, after a pause, "you say nothing to me about your fine lady."

"My fine lady! I do not understand."

"So you did not find her out? She was not a poor girl, as she said, but a fine lady who has not much to do. I saw her get into her carriage. Oh! such a carriage, such horses, such a footman!"

"What do you say! You are trying to deceive me: it is a falsehood."

"It is the truth. Now do you believe in those fine airs of innocence?"

"What a singular adventure!" said Boucher, passing his hand over his forehead: "will she come back?"

At this moment Rosina went and rested her joined hands on the painter's shoulder.

"She did not ask you for anything?" said she, with a mournful but charming expression.

"Nothing, except a crown as the price of the sitting: it is an enigma; I cannot make it out."

"Alas, she will return."

"Who knows? she was to do so this morning."

"I shall take good care to-day not to open the door."

"Why not? what folly! Are you beginning to be jealous?"

"You are very cruel! Will you open the door yourself?"

"Yes."

Rosina drew back with a sigh.

"Then," said she, with tears in her eyes, "the door shall close on me."

Rosina, weeping with love and jealousy, was of adorable beauty; but Boucher, unfortunately for himself, thought only of the mysterious stranger.

"Rosina, you don't know what you are saying; you are foolish."

Boucher had spoken somewhat harshly: the poor girl went towards the door, and in a feeble voice murmured a sad farewell. She doubtless hoped that he would not let her go, that he would catch her in his arms, and console her with a kiss; but he did nothing of the kind: he forgot, the ingrate, that Rosina was not an opera girl; he thought she was making believe, like all the actresses, without heart or faith. Rosina did not make believe; she opened the door, turned towards Boucher; a single tender look would have brought her to his feet; he contented himself with

saying to her, as he would to the first chance-comer,

"Don't put on so many airs."

These words made Rosina indignant.

"It's all over!" said she. At the same moment she closed the door.

The sound of her footsteps went to Boucher's heart. He would have rushed to the stairs, but he checked himself with the idea that she would come back. Another would have done so; Rosina did not, and Boucher set to work to search out the mysterious personage who so poetically personified his Muse.

In vain, did he ransack the fashionable world. He was at all the fêtes, at all the promenades and all the suppers; but he could not find her whom he sought with such insatuated ardor. Rosina was not completely banished from his mind; but the poor girl never appeared by herself in his reminiscences, he always beheld her image by the side of that of the unknown lady. One day, however, as he was looking at his unfinished Virgin, he felt that Rosina was still in his heart. He reproached himself for having abandoned her. He resolved to go forthwith and tell her that he loved her and always had loved her. He went down stairs, and turned towards the Rue St. Anne, making his way through a crowd of carriages and hacks. A young girl passed along the other side of the street, with a basket in her hand. He recognized Rosina. Alas! it was but the shadow of Rosina; grief had made sad havoc with her charms; desertion had crushed her with its icy hand. He was about crossing the street to join her, when a carriage passing prevented his doing so. A woman put her head out of the window.

"It is she!" he exclaimed, completely overcome.

He forgot Rosina, and followed the carriage, ready for whatever might happen. The carriage led him to a mansion in the Rue St. Dominique. The painter boldly presented himself half an hour afterwards, and was conducted to madame the countess's oratory.

It was she, the poor little girl without bread. She told Boucher that curiosity, combined with a little ennui, had led her to his studio, to obtain an opinion on her beauty, once for all, by a competent judge, who would have no reason for telling an untruth.

"I once paid you for a sitting," said Boucher, passionately; "it is now your turn to pay me for one."

It was decided that he should take the countess's portrait; but it was never completed, so much delight did Boucher take in his task.

After the intoxication of this passion was abated, the young girl whom he had forsaken recurred to his mind. On looking at his picture, in which the profane artist had mingled his impressions of the two beauties, he saw clearly that Rosina was the most beautiful. The countess had enticed him with the greatest power, but the charm was dispelled. He again discovered that Rosina possessed that ideal beauty which ravishes lovers and gives genius to painters.

"Yes," said he regretfully. "I deceived myself like a child! the divine and human beauty, the true light, the heavenly sentiment, belonged to Rosina; the seductiveness, the falsehood, the expression which comes neither from the heart nor from heaven, the countess possessed. I spoilt my Virgin, like a fool; but there is still time."

There was not! He ran to the fruiterer's; he asked for Rosina.

"She is dead," said the mother to him.

"Dead!" exclaimed Boucher, pale with despair.

"Yes, Monsieur Artist. She died, as those who die at sixteen, of love."

Arabella Goddard played at her benefit concert in St. James' Hall, on March 18th, Beethoven's Sonata in B flat, Op. 106, and with Joachim the Kreutzer Sonata. Great praise is awarded her by the critics for those performances.

## ART MATTERS.

"The American Society of Painters in Water Colors," of which mention has, from time to time, been made in these columns, is now thoroughly organized, and as it is likely to assume a prominent position in American art, a short sketch of its origin may, perhaps, prove interesting.

The idea of forming a society of water colorists in this country is by no means a new one; encouraged by the great success of the English Water Color Society our artists have long wished to establish a similar organization here. Several attempts have been made, in a small way, but have in each case proved unsuccessful. Whether it was that not sufficient energy was displayed among the founders, or that the public taste of art had not yet become fully developed, I know not, but it was left for the present association to put water color on a firm basis in this country.

Early in December last a number of gentlemen, consisting of Messrs. S. Colman, Wm. Hart, Gilbert Burling, and W. Craig, met and founded the present society. Stimulated by the fine exhibition of water color paintings at the last Artist Fund Society exhibition, they felt that the time had come when water color could with good effect be prominently brought before the American public. The exhibition above alluded to had attracted considerable attention in art circles, and was viewed with great interest by the public at large. Believing, then, that the time had come when a society of water colorists could be successfully inaugurated, and receiving the promise of co-operation of their brother artists, these gentlemen met and framed the constitution of what is now "The American Society of Painters in Water Colors."

Mr. Colman was elected president, Mr. Hart chairman of the Board of Control, and Mr. Gilbert Burling secretary.

The organization of the Society had no sooner become known among the artists of the city than numbers of them sent in their names for election. Many were admitted, and the constitution was adopted. According to this instrument any person desiring to become a member of the Society shall, at the discretion of the Board of Control, be required to exhibit to them three drawings, and upon their approval of the same, his name shall be put to vote, when, should no more than three negatives be cast, he shall be declared a member elect.

The meetings are held monthly, when drawings by the various members are exhibited.

It has been erroneously stated in several of the newspapers that the first exhibition of the Society will be held in the coming Fall, whereas it is not to be until late in the Winter—the Board of Control having decided that it will be better to wait until that time, when they will be able to make a much stronger and more effective exhibition, as their numbers will be larger, and they will then be able to produce pictures worthy the reputation of the Society.

Among the members of the Society, in addition to the officers above mentioned, are Messrs. Lentze, Wust, Bellows, Waterman, Constant Mayer, Van Ingen, J. G. Brown, Guy, J. D. Smilie, Thwaites, Fenn, C. H. Moore, Farrar, R.

Swain Gifford, Bayard Taylor, Mrs. Murray, and others.

Water color drawings are produced in three ways, by washes, stippling, and the use of body color. The first is the most popular among artists, as it produces the desired effect with greater rapidity than either of the other methods, and is used with great success in imparting atmosphere and delicacy to the picture. A good sample of this may be found in the works of Marny, one of the greatest of living water-colorists, who employs this method almost entirely, and has given to the world pictures which, for delicacy of treatment and atmospheric effect, have rarely been surpassed.

Stippling is a much more tedious and laborious process, consisting in laying on the color in small spots with the point of the brush. A fine example of this method is to be found in the works of Mrs. Elizabeth Murray, whose pictures are noted for their strong individualization of character, and brilliancy and richness of color.

In the use of body color the artist has a greater chance to imbue strength and vigor into his work than in either of the methods already mentioned, as he, as a matter of course, using solid masses of color, is enabled to intensify both his lights and shadows to much greater extent than in either of the other processes, producing a picture resembling more an oil than a water color painting. A good example of this style is to be found in the works of Nash, the English water-colorist, who exhibited several pictures at the last Artists' Fund Society exhibition, and which, albeit they were rather inferior productions, attracted considerable attention from their very strength and apparent solidity of color.

It has often been charged against water color that it is not so durable as oil, but this, after all, is only a vague assertion, as the persons bringing the charge have never, as yet, been able to prove it, whereas the water-colorists, on the other side, are able to bring ample proofs of the lasting properties of their favorite vehicle. Turner's oil paintings, for instance, such as are left of them, are in a greatly damaged condition; the paint having cracked, and in many instances faded, whereas in his water color sketches the color is as strong and pure as when first put upon the paper.

George Barret, one of the founders of the English Water Color Society, speaking of this subject, says: "If that which is termed color be put on thinly, it will probably, in the course of time, be so changed by the action of the light, or from other causes, as to lose the power of returning the colored rays to the eye; and then it is said that the color has flown and the picture faded. This will account for the failure of many drawings made in the old way with Indian Ink, and sometimes with grey, by the addition of Indigo Blue to it, which, when finished, have the appearance of a print meagrely tinted; consequently the scanty means by which these tints were produced became wasted, and the effect of color lost; and from this circumstance many persons imagine that water colors are not permanent. They are, on the contrary, perfectly durable when properly applied with a liberal supply of the material, and without any previous preparation of grey. To prove this position I am able to state that I have